

Melissa Weipert

From: Jim Casha <jim.casha@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 1, 2016 9:23 AM
To: Melissa Weipert
Subject: Public Comment - Jim Casha, June 1st, 2016
Attachments: Former DWSD Head Engineer Weighs in on Changes Ordered by Judge Cox.pdf

June 1st, 2016

Public Comment to the House Workforce and Talent Development Committee

RE: HJR MM (Cotter) & HB5677(Lauwers)

I oppose HJR MM (Cotter) and HB 5677 (Lauwers).

In fact, they are 180 degrees opposite the direction you should be taking to protect the health and well being of the public.

The Flint Water Crisis is a case in point. The REGIONAL water crisis that predated Flint by 40 years, and resulted in the Flint Water Crisis, was the changing of the Detroit City Charter in 1974 eliminating the *tenured civil service protection* of the Director (then Chief Engineer) of the Detroit Water & Sewerage Dept (DWSD), the REGIONAL Water Authority supplying Flint with the cleanest drinking water on the planet. The requirement that the Director *also* be a Professional Engineer (P.E.) was also eliminated.

As a tenured civil servant AND a P.E., who swears an oath on his professional license to protect the health and well being of the public, the Director operated with sufficient 'political independence', and without the fear of termination, to protect the health and well being of the public.

He could lose his P.E. license, be fired, *and prosecuted*, if he endangered the public safety ...but he could NOT be terminated for failing to do something '**Dumb & Dangerous**' directed by politicians, EM's, governors, mayors or ...the President.

State employees need MORE civil service protection ... not less!

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See attached letter by

Former DWSD Head Engineer Dennis Green Weighs in on Changes Ordered by Judge Cox



Jim Casha <jim.casha@gmail.com>

Former DWSD Head Engineer Weighs in on Changes Ordered by Judge Cox
1 message

Jim Casha <jim.casha@gmail.com>
To: Jim Casha <jim.casha@gmail.com>

Sat, Mar 5, 2016 at 3:00 PM

Wednesday, November 9, 2011**Former DWSD Head Engineer Weighs in on Changes Ordered by Judge Cox**

Former Head Water Systems Engineer, Dennis L. Green, P.E., who retired from DWSD in 2009 after more than 40 years of service, recently weighed in on the recent changes ordered by Judge Cox in a Letter to the Editor published by the Detroit Free Press published ([here](#)) on November 8, 2011:

U.S. District Judge Sean Cox's call for structural changes in the Detroit Water Department ("Judge Sean Cox's ruling" Nov. 5) came on the heels of the disbanding of the DWSD Engineering Division. It's no coincidence that the decades of struggle with EPA compliance similarly began on the heels of another event involving Engineering.

In 1975, a new Detroit City Charter replaced the tenured chief engineer with a director serving at the pleasure of the mayor and removed the requirement for a Professional Engineer (PE) license.

With civil service tenure's protection from arbitrary dismissal, the chief engineer could take his objections regarding any ill-conceived policy of the mayor or Board of Water Commissioners to the public without fear of reprisal. A PE license requires an oath to protect the public health and safety, but serving at the pleasure of the mayor, an unlicensed director's loyalty is to the administration before the public.

Prior to 1975, DWSD had a worldwide reputation for its engineering and operational success, and its professionals dominated the committees writing the industry's standards. Then, without the check and balance between public safety concerns represented by a licensed engineer and the politics of the Board of Water Commissioners, it took only two years for the politicians to wreck the nation's most respected water system, provoking acrimony with its customers and the EPA.

U.S. District Judge John Feikens' oversight of DWSD was an abject failure. The billing squabbles between DWSD and its suburban customers festered for years. They eventually ended not because of the negotiating skills of his approved politicians and consultants, but as a result of an in-house engineering breakthrough that restored integrity to the billing process.

After years of failure by outside consultants, the Archer administration listened to me, my staff and people doing the actual work. Just like creating a credible water bill, creating a functional, efficient and maintainable treatment plant also begins as an engineering problem that can't be solved by imposing capricious court-ordered deadlines on politicians who won't or can't comprehend the problem.

If Judge Cox and Mayor Dave Bing want a working sewage treatment plant, they need to do what the proposed and existing charters fail to do: demand a director with a PE license, and make sure that director has sufficient political independence to do the job.